

Madam Speaker, today marks the 36th anniversary of Turkey's invasion of the Republic of Cyprus. July 20, 1974 began the Turkish occupation of the northern part of Cyprus and to this day 43,000 Turkish troops occupy nearly 37 percent of Cyprus' territory.

Since 1974, the people of Cyprus have endured mass violation of their human rights and fundamental freedom along with forcible ethnic segregation. The people of Cyprus also witnessed the destruction of their culture and their religious heritage destroyed.

The international community has been actively involved in developing a solution for the people of Cyprus. However, Turkey has repeatedly ignored all international pressure including 75 resolutions that have been adopted by the United Nations Security Council and more than 13 by the United Nations General Assembly since 1974.

Members of Congress along with the international community must continue to work diligently to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. We must strongly urge Turkey to respect human rights and ultimately withdraw its forces from Cyprus.

Cyprus and the U.S. share a deep commitment to uphold the ideals of freedom, democracy, justice, human rights, and the international rule of law. I believe the international community has a moral and ethical obligation to stand with the Cypriots to reunify their island and end the military occupation.